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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

July 22, 2021

**HOUSE REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE
VICE CHAIRMAN**

ASSISTANT WHIP

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION, CIVIL RIGHTS
AND CIVIL LIBERTIES
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**SUBCOMMITTEE ON COURTS, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
AND THE INTERNET**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON ANTITRUST, COMMERCIAL AND
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW**

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON CYBER, INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES
AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

The American Rescue Plan (the Act) is expected to cost American taxpayers more than \$1.9 trillion over the next decade. While there is no doubt our nation needs to recover from the unprecedented challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the massive amounts of new federal debt that are being incurred in this process are alarming. It is critical that every penny of these investments is spent in the most efficient and effective manner.

The Act sets aside \$350 billion to assist state, local, territorial, and tribal governments in recovering from the side effects of the pandemic. The Treasury Department issued an interim rule giving these respective jurisdictions flexibility to use their shares of the funds as they see fit to support COVID-19 response efforts, promote economic recovery, and replace lost revenue for governmental services. *I respectfully request that you direct the Treasury Department to modify the final rule to specify that a portion of these funds must be devoted to law enforcement efforts in our states and local communities.*

As we all know, American cities have experienced a rising wave of crime over the past year or so. Violent crime is on the rise in nearly every major city, including in my district, and murder rates are sky-high. For example, during the Independence Day weekend earlier this month, more than 200 people were killed and over 600 were injured. Nationwide, murders increased by twenty-five percent from 2019 to 2020, and 2021 is shaping up to be even worse. All of this is occurring while liberal Democrat officials across the country are calling for law enforcement departments to be dismantled and defunded. Unfortunately, their dangerous goals are being met.

Between April 2020 and April 2021, law enforcement retirements nationwide rose by forty-five percent, and resignations climbed eighteen percent compared to the previous year. These numbers are even more pronounced for large cities such as New Orleans, which has only sixty percent of the total number of officers it needs. Further exacerbating the issue, departments are also struggling to find recruits to fill open positions, with some canceling all recruit training over the last year due to inadequate funding.

The underfunding of law enforcement puts innocent lives in jeopardy, and unfortunately, Americans are becoming all too familiar with that reality. To get our communities back on track, we must invest in our police officers, sheriff deputies, and other law enforcement personnel. To that end, I was pleased to see “the provision of police, fire, and other public safety services” as an allowed use of Fiscal Recovery Funds for state and local governments. However, merely permitting these funds to go to public safety efforts is not enough. Given the rampant crisis of crime in our country, law enforcement agencies need a guaranteed portion of these funds. As such, I ask the Treasury Department to include in its final rule on American Rescue Plan spending a *requirement* that at least a minimal portion of funds given to state, local, territorial, and tribal governments be spent on law enforcement. The requirement should also specify that if a jurisdiction does not comply, it must submit an explanation in writing to the Treasury Department and Congress as to why such an allocation is not necessary.

Law enforcement officers are self-sacrificing public servants who risk their lives every day when they put on the badge and go out into our communities. They require our support now more than ever as the needs of law enforcement reflect the needs of the people we serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Johnson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mike Johnson
Member of Congress

CC: Secretary of the Treasury, Janet Yellen